

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: FWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime (406-461-0587)

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, March 20-26, 2010

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2008 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

NOTE: FWP has recently redesigned and reorganized its Website. The Wolf Program Home Page can be found at <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>. If you get an error page, go to the FWP Home page and look for Montana Wolves under Fish & Wildlife.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

FWP announces the availability of the 2009 Annual Report. A media release and the FWP Quick Facts Summary are available at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>. The full report can be found by scrolling down the Wolf Program Home page to Reports // look for 2009 Annual Report or click on the photo link for 2009 Annual Report.

FWP is taking applications to fill several volunteer positions to help FWP with wolf monitoring during the upcoming field season. Volunteers investigate public and agency wolf reports and help with trapping efforts. Volunteers are expected to get underway sometime in April and wrap up by June 30. An extension past June 30 is possible but depends on funding availability. Volunteers need not stay the whole time. Learn more at: [Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks: Gray Wolf Volunteer Opportunity](http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/employment/wolfVolunteers.html). (<http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/employment/wolfVolunteers.html>)

Flights: Ross flew in the Gallatin / Madison / Gravelly areas on 3/24. Asher flew south of Livingston and Big Timber on 3/24. Laudon conducted a low level survey flight and search for missing wolves in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On 3/20, WS confirmed 4 miniature horses were killed by wolves west of Superior. The Superior pack is known to use the area. Traps/snares were set on the 20th, but no wolves had returned as of the 21st and neither of the 2 collared wolves was heard in the vicinity. FWP authorized WS to remove all 5 wolves from the Superior pack and issued a kill permit to the owners for the property. The pack has increasingly spent more time at lower elevations closer to people and livestock and have killed a yearling heifer, injured a colt, and killed several dogs over the years. In addition we've received other reports of harassing cattle, killing domestic fowl and mink, as well as chewing up garden hoses,

irrigation hoses, and snowmobile seats. FWP has installed fladry at several locations over the years to try to prevent further damage. No wolves returned to the depredation site over the last couple days. Three wolves were killed on 3/23 and efforts to remove the last 2 wolves are ongoing.

On 3/20, WS confirmed that wolves killed a calf on private land in the Big Hole near Jackson. WS confirmed a second calf killed on this ranch on 3/25. The Miner Lakes pack is suspected to be involved in both incidents. WS has previously authorized removal of the remaining pack members and control efforts will continue for the next 45 days with this latest incident. FWP has provided info to area landowners about state law and regulations allowing taking of wolves by private citizens when wolves are in livestock.

On 3/22, WS investigated a report of a calf being killed by wolves south of Butte. WS determined that it was unconfirmed as a wolf kill and most likely died of pneumonia. Coyotes had fed on the carcass after it died. The Table Mountain pack (the Highlands Range) was verified in 2009 and is known to travel through this area. WS and FWP efforts to place a collar to monitor this pack are ongoing.

On 3/23, WS killed 1 uncollared black wolf (likely a yearling) from the Ninemile pack this morning via helicopter. Control is complete at this time and traps will be pulled today.

Outreach and Education

Laudon spoke to students in a wildlife biology class at Flathead High School on wolves and wolf management. About 20 in attendance.

On 3/24, Lance presented information on the '09 annual report, pending litigation, Echinococcus, '09 wolf season, and held a general question and answer session at the Butte Skyline Sportsman's public meeting. About 40 people attended.

Research Activities

Nothing to report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

Nothing to report.

Other Updates

Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation in Missoula Federal Court

Montana's interests in support of delisting have been represented and brought forward through efforts by FWP in consultation with the Montana Attorney General's Office. FWP filed its last written brief on 1/28.

FWP argued that: 1. for a variety of reasons, it is lawful for USFWS to establish different levels of protection for a species, subspecies or Distinct Population Segment under the Endangered Species Act; 2. the facts show that Montana's existing regulatory mechanisms will keep wolf populations well above the federal recovery criteria and encourage connectivity; 3. sufficient genetic exchange has taken place and will continue; and 4. Montana's hunting season is not a basis for relisting the gray wolf.

At this time, a hearing for oral arguments has not been scheduled. One could be scheduled at any time, but there is no requirement for an oral hearing.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board will be holding a board meeting on April 9th, Room 152 of the State Capitol in Helena. An agenda for this meeting will be posted on the Board's website www.llrmb.mt.gov around April 1st. A couple of items of interest on the agenda will be fundraising, administrative rules, USDA WS specialist on prevention and USDA Farm Service Agency personnel to explain details on Notice LDAP-20. LDAP-20 is an amendment to the 2008 Farm Bill to provide emergency assistance for livestock losses (ELAP). The LLRMB board meeting will be broadcast over the internet and a link to the meeting will be posted on our website when it becomes available.

The agenda and minutes from previous meetings are available at [Montana Department of Livestock](http://MontanaDepartmentofLivestock). The program coordinator can be reached at 444-5609.

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To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP online. Use the following shortcut link and be sure to update your bookmarks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana at the statewide office: 657-6464. Or, call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock death loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp>. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.